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JOINT STATE/USIS MESSAGE

Weekly Press Summary, Dec. 25-31, 1959

Iran-Iraq: (For the press summary on this subject during the period Dec. 21-29 see our G-86. This report covers only the remainder of the week.) Although the volume of comment on Iraq continued with only slight diminution, there were few of the critical, personal comments on Qassim which had dominated the previous ten days. The papers still insisted on Iran's rights to a boundary running along the Shatt-al-Arab's thalweg and returned to the old theme of the instability of the Iraqi government. Itolant referred to Qassim's speech of December 28, saying that if he is truly interested in respecting international treaties as he claims, why does he ignore the 1937 Iran-Iraq treaty. Admitting that Qassim could do as he pleased with internal Iraqi propaganda, the paper continued that "however, the Iranian government and people will not allow anyone to trample on their rights". Another editorial in the same paper commented that "an underdeveloped country like Iraq" needs a leader with a "composed mind, free from daily commotions and disturbances". However, under the present circumstances the Iraqi government is forced to make concessions to the army and various other pressure groups. The paper sees little hope for developing internal Iraqi stability. Farman printed the unsubstantiated reports that "Iran-Iraq relations will probably be restored to normal during this week" and that Iraqi military forces along the border had been withdrawn. The Tehran Journal said war with Iraq was "an unthinkable policy".

Iran-USSR: Answers to Russian propaganda continued on a very reduced scale. Itolant wanted Radio Moscow to realize that Iranian papers are completely free to print any form of criticism of the Iranian government. Such a right does not exist in the USSR. "Can it be that no Soviet citizen has ever had a grievance?" Using the same theme in a

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different editorial, Etelast spoke of the freedom of Iranian youth to select their own careers, while such rights do not exist in the Soviet Union.

Miscellaneous International: Farman hailed the NATO meetings in Paris saying that "all member countries of the pact have agreed to preserve their unity and preparedness against communist aggression." Etelast was enthusiastic about Eisenhower's visit to Morocco and the US's plans to abandon the bases there - "a magnanimous act." However, the paper pointed out that by 1963 such airbases would not be needed anyway, because American missiles will have replaced airplanes. Etelast wrote under the heading "Happy Ending" on the end of the 1950's. According to the paper, the three major accomplishments of the decade were "the defeat of imperialism, the control of space, and perhaps the end of the Cold War." In addition, special mention was given to the Bandung Conference and the rise of Nasser.

Miscellaneous Internal: Both of the English-language papers and some of those in Farsi spoke of the spirit of Christmas and Iran's historic connections to Christianity. Etehad Melli and Mehr Iran ran two rather frank editorials on the living conditions of average Iranians, with both papers backing the proposed Land Distribution Law, and the former hoping for "further steps toward equality" and the latter that something would be done of equal scope to improve the conditions of urban tenants.

WALLS

CS

MLGreene/hfo
December 31, 1959

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